

D R A F T

Meeting Minutes, September 21, 2005

City Center Advisory Commission

CCAC Members Present: Carolyn Barkley Gretchen Buehner, Suzanne Gallagher, Alexander Craghead (Alternate), Alice Ellis Gaut, Marland Henderson, Lily Lilly, Mike Marr, Roger Potthoff, Judy Munro, Carl Switzer, Mike Stevenson
CCAC Member Absent: Jim Andrews, Ralf Hughes (Alternate)
Staff Present: Tom Coffee, Duane Roberts, Barbara Shields
Consultants Present: Jeff Tashman, Tina Mosca

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Mike Marr called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Carl pointed out that the corrected comments attributed to him on page 1 of the minutes concerning the revenues received by the affected tax districts under tax increment financing continued to be inaccurate. The point he had made was that the overlapping districts will continue to collect the same amount of taxes as they collected at the time the UR plan is adopted.

Mike M. commented that p. 2 of the minutes incorrectly states that he is "not opposed to adding . . . the Safeway property . . ." Safeway property should be stricken from the sentence. He also noted that the p. 11 reference to the September 22nd Council meeting should read September 27th meeting.

Alice pointed out that the sentence on p. 8 referencing her as requesting the addition of a pedestrian crossing on HWY 99W was not made by her. The sentence will be removed.

In response to a question from Mike M. concerning remarks attributed to him on page 5 of the minutes, Roger indicated that the reference to "business owners" should be changed to "property owners". He clarified that his comments referred to property owners who have abdicated their responsibilities by not maintaining minimum standards. The context of these comments was a discussion of landowners within the newly added areas who potentially could object to their inclusion in an expanded UR district. Roger reiterated that the work of the CCAC should not be held hostage to those who have not met their responsibilities.

Judy commented that the Planning Commission had not discussed or taken a position on the UR Plan. Gretchen commented that personal discussions of the UR plan had taken place outside Planning Commission meetings. She clarified

that the p. 3 reference in the minutes to the Planning Commission and the TDIP Task Force attributed to her is a misstatement and should be deleted.

In response to a question put to her by Mike M., Lily explained that her comments to Roger about developers wanting all four corners of the HWY 99W intersection to be redeveloped were based on private discussions with developers. Roger stated that comments about the importance of the HWY 99W/Hall intersection as a portal to the downtown were made at a recent meeting of the Catalyst Project Work Group. He also noted that the UR consultant stated at the September Council meeting that the HWY 99W/Hall intersection area is an important component of the UR plan.

Mike emphasized that everyone has the right to express a personal opinion, but that it is important to stick to facts as opposed to personal opinion in making public statements. He noted that at the developers meeting held some months ago as part of the downtown planning process no reference was made to the HWY 99W/Hall intersection.

Alice commented that she appreciates the importance of working from first hand knowledge, but that lots of information flows in unofficial ways.

The group approved the minutes as amended.

3. Review Draft UR Plan

Jeff Tashman overviewed the draft UR plan. He explained that the document is composed of sections familiar to the group and sections not seen before. He walked the group through each section of the draft plan. The introduction tells the reader what the plan is about. It matches the language contained in the City Charter. The map and legal description reflect the votes taken at the last CCAC meeting. A new issue that has come up since then concerns the western boundary of the district. The boundary included in the draft plan, instead of following the creek channel, as it has up to now, follows the back edges of the tax lots that make up the park. The reason is that it makes sense to include the whole park, since projects in the plan target Fanno Creek Park as a whole, and not a portion of the park.

Mike M. commented that the intention of the Downtown Improvement Plan Task Force all along was to include the whole park. He also pointed out that the Ash Creek bike/ped bridge project would extend across the creek channel. Carolyn observed that the portion of the park located east of the creek was inadvertently omitted from the Downtown Improvement Plan boundary. Because of the difficulty involved in justifying out-of-district expenditures, Jeff explained that it is vastly preferable to include within the district boundary all projects identified in the Plan as receiving tax increment financing. Alice commented that she wished to see the park returned to a natural state as a wildlife corridor, and that the park should be

provided with as much administrative protection as possible. She elaborated that this is not to say that leaving the park in or out is the best thing to do. Jeff pointed out that the plan is silent on what happens in the park. Including or excluding the park by itself will not affect the park.

Marland commented the entire park should be included because the footbridge over Fanno Creek, one of the projects listed in the UR plan, spans both sides of the creek. Alexander observed that including the whole park would allow tax increment dollars to be used to "take care of the park." Carl pointed out that the UR public opinion survey showed strong support for the park. Including all the park acreage within the UR boundary would provide an opportunity to invest UR money in all portions of the park.

Mike S. indicated that he did support including private homes within an expanded boundary. Mike Marr noted that the two paint stores on Main are located on the other side of the creek. It would not be legal to spend UR money on these properties, should they not be included in an expanded boundary.

In response to a question from Tom, Mike M. explained that, although the land is zoned CBD, the Main Street Apartments were not include within the plan boundary, because the area is already developed and not likely to change from residential.

Suzanne moved to include the two paint store properties within the district. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Mike M. commented that the Downtown Task Force's perception was that the dividing line went to the center of the creek. But he is not hearing a lot of difference of opinion from the CCAC on the park boundary issue. Carl commented that the best case scenario is that the UR Agency spends urban renewal money on enhancing the park. The worst case scenario is that the Agency does not spend money on it. Alice commented that UR should not be the process to decide what happens to the park.

Gretchen proposed approving the expanded easterly boundary, subject to Alice raising any strong objections for discussion at next week's special boundary meeting. Suzanne commented that the whole park should be included within an extended boundary, with the understanding that Alice will do a review and confer with other interested parties and that the issue could be opened up for discussion next week. A voice vote to extend the boundary to include all the publicly-owned parkland located west of the creek was unanimous, except for Alice's abstention.

In response to Mike M's question, Jeff explained that the funeral home and gas station were included within the boundary because these properties are within the sub-area voted in at the last CCAC meeting. The plan reflects the decision of the group on the demarcation of the HWY 99W/Hall or NE sub-area.

Discussion continued on the draft plan. Mike M. drew attention to the fact that Center Street is listed under Streetscape Projects, but not listed under Street Improvement Projects. Jeff responded that the list of Street Improvement Projects will be revised to include Center Street.

Individual CCAC members went on to propose other additions and deletions to the draft Plan. To address Alice's concerns regarding park protection, Tina Mosca suggested beginning Section "C" with the statement that "all projects will take into account maintaining environmental integrity."

Jeff commented that identifying a project in the UR plan enables tax increment funds to be expended on the project. Mike S. commented that if a project is included in the plan, the agency is obligated to spend money on it. Jeff responded that including a project is non-binding in terms of expenditures. It enables but does not obligate the Agency to allocate resources to the project.

A discussion of civic uses followed. Suzanne expressed concern about using UR money to relocate the police station. Alex asked why UR needs to provide funding for this project. It doesn't fit the UR goals and objectives. Tom asked what the police project contributes to downtown revitalization. Alice noted that excluding this project would not preclude the station's relocation. Mike M. commented that the police and post office projects are conceptual and long term. The police station project came about at the request of the police department, and the rationale for its relocation is to provide for better visibility. Suzanne moved that the police station relocation project be removed from the project list. The group voted unanimously in favor of removal.

Several persons commented on the post office project. Mike M. pointed out that federal and not UR or other City money would be used to finance this project. Including the post office in the plan will facilitate its possible relocation.

Gretchen commented that staff is the best judge of the technical gobbledygook included in the plan.

Mike M. pointed out that on Section V, Line 2 the work "proposed" Downtown Improvement Plan should be removed and the date it was adopted inserted in its place.

Roger asked if it were appropriate to reference in the plan the present lack of design controls on downtown development and the possible inclusion of design authority as part of the UR plan. Jeff explained that the UR plan conforms to the comprehensive plan. Design controls would need to be put into effect as part of the comprehensive plan as opposed to the UR plan.

Alice asked for stronger language regarding stream corridor protection in Section 6. Jeff answered that the policy statements are quotes from the Downtown Improvement Plan. Carl asked if there were any value in adding goals and objectives from the Parks System Master Plan. Jeff concurred noting that the UR Plan quotes the Transportation Master Plan and that this provides a precedent for citing Parks System Master Plan policies.

Alice expressed support for going beyond the policies in the parks master plan. Tina suggested including a broad, sweeping statement up front regarding the importance of stream corridor restoration and preservation. Lily commented that the Downtown Improvement Plan is intended to be a green plan.

Jeff noted that since the UR plan does not authorize condemnation, there is no need to develop a relocation plan. Mike commented that this does not preclude the UR agency from offering relocation assistance to willing sellers and existing businesses. Jeff indicated that this authority is covered under existing relocation law. He went on to note that relocation assistance would be allowed under the section on incentive programs. A clear cut way of addressing this issue would be to characterize relocation assistance as something the agency can do in appropriate circumstances.

Mike M. stated that this authority should be broader and include more flexibility. Jeff agreed to wordsmith p. 23 and other sections to provide greater latitude with regard to subsidizing some of the costs of relocation to sites within and outside the district.

Gretchen and Roger both recommended that a provision be added to the UR plan regarding the impact of tax increment financing on schools. This provision should point out that under the current K-12 financing system, property tax revenues foregone by the district would be offset by additional revenues from the State School Fund. Jeff handed out a memo on the impact of tax increment financing on K-12 education. The main point is that the scale of the statewide impact is 1-3%.

Jeff informed the group that he has received no legal opinion as yet on whether increasing the area of the district would require voter approval.

4. Updated UR Process Timeline

Tom went over the timeline.

5. Discuss Outreach Program

Alexander informed the group that Council has concluded that there are not enough staff to carry out the public involvement program. The UR public outreach committee was formed to fill the void. It consists of 6-7 members. Its main purpose is to provide input to the outreach consultants and to work with them on

developing outreach materials on an as needed basis. It not intended to be a policy body. It is instead a quick response, close by, and available resource.

Carissa Collins' role in the community outreach or guest speaker program is to keep tabs on what everyone is doing. She is the staff administrator for outreach activities. A spread sheet of organizations seeking UR presenters will be posted on the UR webpage. The outreach will begin sometime in October. Norton-Arnold will provide outreach training. The biggest outreach event is the November 10th UR open house. Roger has developed a list of questions for a Q & A handout. Roger noted that the list is intended to be a thought stimulator. Its twenty-two questions may be too many. It is designed to answer basic questions. Among other benefits, the handout could help prevent a flood of questions from citizens that potentially could overwhelm public hearings or City telephone lines.

Judy asked about the possibility of making a video of the training.

Gretchen pointed out that TIF (Tax Increment Financing) also has a transportation meaning (Transportation Impact Fee). The group may need to create a different acronym for tax increment financing to avoid confusing the public.

A discussion of the sign-up sheet with the number of hours members are willing to contribute the outreach effort followed. The discussion touched on outreach to the owners of property within the expanded areas.

Alex introduced a petition from the owners of five residential properties, all bordering the east side of Hall between HWY 99 and Hunziker, who wish their land to be included in the UR district. One of the petitions signers, Patricia Clickener, was in attendance and spoke to the group. She noted that Hall is the entry point to the downtown area. Adding the five properties in question will provide an opportunity to "do something nice" along Hall.

Lily commented that the subject of including the properties was brought up at the Catalyst Project meeting. The houses stand out like a sore thumb. The visual design of this section of Hall should tie in with the Hall/HYW 99W intersection improvements.

Roger asked Ms. Clickener whether her primary objective in wanting to be included in the district is to accomplish a change in the zoning of the area from residential to commercial or to achieve other benefits from being included. Ms. Clickener responded that the current R-4.5 zoning on the land makes no sense. It precludes multi-family and commercial development. An upgraded city center "should be visually attractive all the way around".

Tom commented that any change in the land use designation should be accomplished through the land use process.

6. Other Business/Announcements

Mike M. adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM.